IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-21 and add new claims 22-27 as follows:

22. (New) An answer system for technical support comprising:

means for registering inquiry information sent from a user via a telecommunication network;

means for preventing the registered inquiry information from being accessed by other users via the telecommunication network;

means for sending an answer to the inquiry information to the user via the telecommunication network; and

a retrieving system for retrieving information of countermeasures taken for an occurred abnormality, based on the inquiry information which is sent from the user and includes apparatus at which the abnormality occurred or a portion of the apparatus at which the abnormality occurred and a phenomena of abnormality occurrence.

23. (New) An answer system for technical support comprising:

means for registering inquiry information sent from a user via a telecommunication network;

2

means for preventing the registered inquiry information from being accessed by other users via the telecommunication network;

means for sending an answer to the inquiry information to the user via the telecommunication network; and

a retrieving system in which, on the basis of an operation time of an apparatus at which an abnormality occurred or a portion of the apparatus at which an abnormality occurred and as to which the user inquired, the longer the operation time is, the higher a priority of countermeasure information for the abnormality caused thereby is made.

24. (New)   An answer system for technical support comprising:

means for registering inquiry information sent from a user via a telecommunication network;

means for preventing the registered inquiry information from being accessed by other users via the telecommunication network;

means for sending an answer to the inquiry information to the user via the telecommunication network; and

a retrieving system in which, on the basis of past abnormality occurrence frequencies or times of an abnormality-

occurred apparatus at which an abnormality occurred or a portion of the apparatus at which an abnormality occurred and as to which the user inquired, the higher the abnormality occurrence frequencies are or the more the abnormality occurrence times are, the higher a priority of countermeasure information for the abnormality caused thereby is made.

25. (New)   A technical support method of furnishing technical information services via a telecommunication network, comprising:

receiving inquiry information sent from a user via the telecommunication network, via means for preventing the inquiry information from being accessed by other users via the telecommunication network;

registering the inquiry information received by the server in an inquiry information database;

retrieving information of countermeasures taken for an occurred abnormality, based on the inquiry information which is sent from the user and includes an apparatus at which the abnormality occurred or a portion of the apparatus at which the abnormality occurred and a phenomena of abnormality occurrence; and

NIP-216-02

sending the outputted countermeasure information to the user.

26. (New) A technical support method of furnishing technical information services via a telecommunication network, comprising:

receiving inquiry information sent from a user via a telecommunication network, via means for preventing the inquiry information from being accessed by other users via the telecommunication network;

registering the inquiry information received by the server in an inquiry information database;

retrieving information of countermeasures taken for an occurred abnormality, on the basis of an operating time of an apparatus at which an abnormality occurred or a portion of an apparatus at which an abnormality occurred and as to which the user inquired; and

sending the information of countermeasures to the registered user, with such priority that the longer the operation time is the higher is the priority of countermeasure information for the abnormality caused thereby.

27. (New)   A technical support method of furnishing technical information services via a telecommunication network, comprising the steps of:

receiving inquiry information sent from a user via a telecommunication network, via means for preventing the inquiry information from being accessed by other users via the telecommunication network;

registering the inquiry information received by the server in an inquiry information database;

retrieving information of countermeasures taken for occurred abnormality, on the basis of past abnormality occurrence frequencies of an apparatus at which an abnormality occurred or a portion of the apparatus at which an abnormality occurred and as to which the user inquired; and

sending the information of countermeasures to the user, with such priority that the higher the abnormality occurrence frequencies are or the more the more the abnormality occurrence times are, the higher is the priority of countermeasure information for the abnormality caused thereby.